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SUBJECT: Goma Report for January 11-13 - ethnic groups  
get their say; convergence to go after FDLR

1. (SBU) Summary: The Kivus Conference is moving toward the end of its lengthy plenary phase. Ethnic communities and armed groups in both Kivus have, for the most part, had their say and the more difficult phase of bringing them together on a concrete way forward will soon begin. Amid the sometimes hateful language and many divergences, there were points of convergence, in particular, all parties' wish to deal with the FDLR. End Summary.

2. (SBU) The Kivus Conference is still projected to conclude January 20, even though the plenary sessions are stretching beyond the original estimate. The presentations by ethnic communities finally got under way on January 11 with speeches by representatives of North Kivu communities, as well as an important speech by Presidential Advisor Ngwej on the plan to deal with the FDLR, and a speech by Tim Shortley, Senior Adviser to Assistant Secretary Frazer, who had arrived January 10. On January 12, the South Kivu communities began their speeches, which were ever lengthier and carried over to half of January 13. The armed groups of North Kivu, starting with CNDP, had their say on the afternoon of January 13. Armed groups from South Kivu will speak on January 14 and may carry over to January 15, meaning that the time for discussion at the level of workshops will be compressed (assuming that the closing date of January 20 is maintained).

#### North Kivu Ethnic Groups

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3. (SBU) The twelve North Kivu speeches on January 11 were a mix of good and bad, though most communities made an effort to get into the conciliatory mood of the Conference. The main exception was the Hundes and Niangas of Walikale and Masisi Territories, who were aggressively hostile toward the Tutsis, disputing the Tutsis' Congolese nationality and seeking to reserve for themselves a territory where, effectively, no other Congolese could enter without their approval. The Hutu spokesman, on the other hand, reserved his ire for the Nandes from northern North Kivu, while calling for return of all refugees (including Tutsi). The Pygmy speaker reminded the audience (now grown to over 1,000 Conference participants) that the Pygmies were the original inhabitants and had suffered more than anyone else. The Tutsi, being last alphabetically, spoke last, to a largely silent but respectful audience, emphasizing their victimization over several decades. He called for a special territory or zone of protection for the Tutsis within North Kivu and a system of quotas for Tutsis in government and military positions, the only occasion in his speech that the audience reacted with loud "Nos."

4. (SBU) Common elements in these speeches were a call for restoring the authority of the state, condemnation of the army as a major human rights violator and call for its reform, call for brassage of all armed groups, and the importance of finding a way to

get the ex-FAR/Interahamwe (FDLR) to go back to Rwanda. The name Nkunda was only mentioned once, but all speakers talked about FDLR. There was mostly agreement on the need for return of Congolese refugees, so long as those are properly identified, including input from village chiefs. Afterward, international community observers debated whether the exercise had done more good than harm. They concluded that it had been a cathartic event, for the most part moderate, and therefore a good thing.

Government reiterates call for action against FDLR  
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15. (SBU) Presidential Advisor Ngwej gave a lengthy afternoon discourse on the government's plan, submitted to Rwanda December 1, to repatriate ex-FAR/Interahamwe (FDLR) as required under the Nairobi Communique. Ngwej's presentation essentially initiated the non-military component of the December 1 plan. Ngwej, a Katangan, was one of the few non-Kivusians to address the Conference, but he did a convincing job. The thrust was that all the people of the Kivus had to join together in this two-month period of "sensitization" (awareness-raising) during which the FDLR could voluntarily go to transfer centers and be repatriated to Rwanda or outside the Kivus. He noted that 30 percent of the 6,000 FDLR elements were Congolese, and he focused particular importance on the Conference as a "sensitization" vehicle. The voluntary phase would end in mid-March, whence would begin the military phase. He said that, contrary to claims by some Congolese, Rwanda's reinsertion program was effective. "Rwanda has made considerable efforts, and life in the bush here is unjustifiable." The threat of FDLR to Rwanda was "real," while to Congolese it was "constant." If there were a need for inter-Rwandan dialogue, that was an issue solely for Rwanda not for DRC; DRC just needed the FDLR to go home. DRC would turn over any FDLR elements pursued by international justice, as DRC

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wanted nothing to do with genocidaires.

16. (SBU) International observers agreed among themselves afterward that, while there was not the slightest chance that DRC would be militarily prepared to take on the FDLR (the most powerful and widespread armed group in the Kivus) any time soon, Ngwej had spoken well and at a key moment, helping to galvanize Kivusians on this subject. Foreign Minister Mbusa told the observers that it would be best for Conference president Abbe Malu Malu, who was a precious resource that should not be overused, not to engage the FDLR leadership now in talks, but that rather such a role would be assumed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense.

Special advisor Shortley delivers message  
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17. (SBU) The final presentation of the day came from U.S. Senior Adviser to Assistant Secretary Frazer, Tim Shortley. He emphasized the importance of the Conference and the urgency of acting now to end armed conflict in the Kivus. He called for a durable ceasefire and highlighted the international community's willingness to support reconstruction in post-conflict Kivu. Malu Malu concluded the day with an emotional gesture, calling the 14 CNDP delegates -- who were present in the cramped grand hall and not, as they had been, in one of the ancillary rooms connected by television -- to come forward and be recognized, which they were with tepid applause.

18. (SBU) The spokespersons for the South Kivu ethnic groups spoke at much greater length January 12 than had their North Kivu counterparts the previous day, and the spirit was less moderate. The Bembe and Fulero relentlessly attacked the Tutsis/Banyamulenge as being not Congolese, while the Buyu and Bwali attacked the Bembe. The Banyamulenge speaker gave a polished address, more articulate than the others, calling for an end of demonization of, and discrimination against, Tutsis and the creation of a separate administrative territory for the Banyamulenge. Most speakers went into history at great length, picking and choosing from Belgian archives "facts" most suitable to themselves.

19. (SBU) Speaking to international observers afterward, Malu Malu said that the Banyamulenge, Bembe, and Fulero constituted a

"triangle of hatred," to which other South Kivusian ethnicities aligned themselves. He would ask President of the National Assembly Kamerhe (a South Kivusian and president of the Conference's Wise Men's Committee) to give particular attention to this triangle. Mbusa urged the international observers to talk to Azarias Ruberwa, a key Banyamulenge member of the Wisemen's Committee, to persuade the Banyamulenge against pushing for a separate territory; Mbusa said that this demand that would take the Kivus in the wrong direction.

¶10. (SBU) Malu Malu said that he hoped the Conference would make progress on nationality issues. It was necessary for the Conference to agree, first, that all Congolese were "equally Congolese" with equal rights, even if they had just arrived and just acquired Congolese citizenship, and second, that all Congolese should have the right to circulate and live anywhere in the country. Mbusa pointed out that the new constitution should have resolved these issues, but the Ministry of Justice, like the whole state apparatus, was so weak and corrupt that nationality status went to the highest bidder or according to ethnic prejudice.

#### Special Envoys Meet on Nkunda

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¶11. (SBU) Senior Adviser Shortley met with EU and Belgian envoys and MONUC January 12. Shortley said that Nkunda was focused not on the Conference but on issues that would arise in the technical committee that to be established by or after the Conference. In Nkunda's concept, there would be four persons each from CNDP and the government on the technical committee, with U.S. and MONUC as observers (others, such as EU and Belgium, might be included). Nkunda wanted the ceasefire to be extended, and he said he had not been responding militarily to FARDC provocations. MONUC would need to increase its presence inside Nkunda's territory as agreed by all parties, to ensure protection of CNDP and the populace. He sought brassage for all armed groups, but he wanted CNDP troops to be put under brassage only within North Kivu. This position, Nkunda implied, would be open to discussion within the technical committee, where he hoped (but was not optimistic) that the government side would have members capable of conducting a serious negotiation. Nkunda rejected any discussion of exile. He sought amnesty for insurrection and restoration of rank for all the CNDP troops. He said that if the government continued trying the military option, he

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would, next time, not just stop at Sake but "go all the way."  
Mainly, Nkunda sought serious dialogue.

¶12. (SBU) EU envoy Roeland van de Geer characterized the Conference leadership as effective and said that the Conference could give a good impetus to the follow-on technical committee, but van de Geer worried that the government in Kinshasa would not be forthcoming. The international community would need to bring great pressure on Kabila. Belgian envoy Jozef Smets said that Foreign Minister Mbusa had told him the previous day that his standing was fragile and that Kamerhe was "in disgrace." On the other hand, the Conference was building up tremendous momentum and might almost take on the force of a referendum.

¶13. (SBU) The January 13 plenary opened with lengthy presentations by four more South Kivu communities, with the Bashi (Shi) presentation being a model of moderation (Presidential Advisor Chissambo said later that he had read it in advance) and the Vira community wavering between denying Tutsi/Banyamulenge nationality and calling for reconciliation.

#### Armed groups have their turn

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¶14. (SBU) CNDP opened the afternoon January 13 with the first presentation by an armed group. The address, given by CNDP delegation head Kambasu Ngene, a short round man with none of the "classic" Tutsi morphology, artfully combined calls for peace and reconciliation with a repetition of well-known CNDP demands. The CNDP, he said, recognized the legitimacy of the government after the election of 2006, but those elections were not a blank check for

permanent legitimacy. CNDP regretted that the government had preferred a military option. The great threat to DRC was the ex-FAR/Interhamwe. All Congolese outside the country should be assured return -- including opposition head Bemba. (Note: Mention of Bemba was perhaps the greatest surprise in the speech. End note.) The process of brassage would have to be "completely revisited," citizens could not be exiled, and "arrest warrants against some military chiefs" would have to be retracted unconditionally. CNDP would accept direct negotiations, with neutral mediation, as soon as possible.

¶15. (SBU) There followed speeches by Pareco and North Kivu Mai Mai groups. The spokesman for the Autochthonous Armed Groups of North Kivu, Didier Bitake, followed the pattern of the Hunde and Nianga communities but at greater length and with even more pointed antagonism toward the Tutsis. It was the most hard-line speech of the Conference, to date. He called for the removal of FDLR but emphasized that that must be accomplished peacefully, else the autochthonous peoples would suffer reprisals. The speakers for the more Hutu-oriented Pareco and Mongol Mai Mai were less immoderate, focusing on return of all refugees (not to exclude fellow Rwandophone Tutsis), the urgent need to deal with FDLR, and the need for a special tribunal to investigate the massive killings of Hutus in DRC in the post-1996 period. After these speeches, moderator Kamerhe commented that there were several common elements among the armed groups, viz., the need to strengthen the Congolese state, the need to respect the Constitution, the urge for peace, the general feeling of being marginalized, the failure of army integration, concerns about nationality and the need for reintegration of transplanted populations, problems with hate language and pandering to ethnicity, and wanting release of prisoners. He hoped the Conference would be able to build on these points of commonality.

¶16. (SBU) Speaking afterward to the international observers, Malu Malu said that when the presentations of the armed groups concluded (South Kivu groups would have the floor January 14), the Conference would enter its most difficult phase. The Conference would have to produce concrete actions and the populace would need to see immediate results. MONUC representative Steve Jackson described to him a plan for immediate stabilization of the region to cover the gap between humanitarian and developmental assistance and expected that the newly-arrived head of MONUC would come soon to Goma to discuss it. Malu Malu noted that much of the government was in Goma or could be quickly summoned there, to discuss this matter. Van de Geer said that the international observers would ponder proposals for concrete actions for the Conference and would share them with Malu Malu.

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